

splash!

quick facts on...

# Land Stewardship Program

OCTOBER 2006

## The South Florida Water Management District

is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

**Our Mission** is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

## 2006 Key Accomplishments

- **Maximizing war on exotic vegetation: treated 19% more acreage than projected**
- **Increased use of aerial burning: 10,000 acres burned in one month**
- **Completed comprehensive public use rule revisions and published new Recreation Guide**



**T**he Land Stewardship Program manages property and associated water areas owned or controlled by the South Florida Water

Management District. Lands are protected, enhanced, restored and preserved for project purposes and for the use and enjoyment of existing and future generations.

Since passage of the state's Water Management Lands Trust Fund in 1981, the SFWMD and its acquisition partners have purchased 378,382 acres of environmentally sensitive lands (not counting 800,000 acres in the three Water Conservation Areas that were acquired prior to 1981). The program has direct management responsibility for 186,544 acres in 11 projects. For the 191,838 acres of non-District managed lands, agreements or leases have been entered into with other agencies, local governments or private contractors. Water resource projects, or those lands associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) consisting largely of impacted agricultural lands, have added another 206,109 acres.

## Program Goal

**To provide natural resource protection, effective land management and reasonable opportunities for appropriate agricultural use while allowing compatible recreational uses on designated public lands**

The Land Stewardship Program includes activities to restore lands to their natural state and condition, manage them in an environmentally acceptable manner, and to provide public recreational opportunities that are compatible with protecting natural resources. Additionally, the Land Stewardship Program includes activities to manage those properties that are acquired by the District for future CERP or other projects until such time as the land is needed for construction.

Program activities include: developing and implementing land management plans, controlling invasive exotic plants, restoring natural fire regimes, restoring native communities, employing multiple-use practices, managing interim agricultural uses through reservations, lease agreements or similar agreements and opening lands for appropriate public use.



The Land Stewardship Program activities include removing and controlling invasive exotic plants such as the melaleuca tree. The aggressive invasive trees spread rapidly, choking out native plant communities that support wildlife habitats.



*The Land Stewardship Program is committed to make public lands available for recreational uses that do not adversely affect the restoration goals of projects. District staff regularly volunteer time toward community outreach activities to teach youth how to be good stewards of our water and land resources.*

## Strategies

- Implement year one of a five year recovery plan with the objective of increasing the annual treatment targets for exotic and fire management – including specific efforts to address lygodium
- Maximize resource-based recreation where appropriate
- Restore and manage targeted lands to improve wildlife habitat value
- Efficiently manage lands for construction of water resource projects during the interim holding period
- Develop, update and implement land management plans for all properties
- Maximize management partnerships
- Restore natural hydrology, fire frequency, and vegetation
- Provide alternate sources of revenue to support land management activities

## Success Indicators

- Active recreation programs on all lands that have legal practicable access and compatible resource conditions
- Low exotic infestation levels on all lands within 3 years of purchase
- All fire-dependent communities burned at least once within 5 years of purchase
- On-site hydrologic restoration completed within 5 to 10 years of purchase
- Working partnerships with private land managers for interim lands
- Acres of District-managed lands infested with invasive non-native upland plants by degree of land coverage
- Acres in managed conservation areas acquired by the District
- For District-owned lands: number of management plans required; number of management plans completed; and percentage of management plans completed on schedule
- Number and percent of land management plan activities being implemented according to plan schedules
- Acres of land acquired through less-than-fee ownership on an annual and cumulative basis
- Number of acres identified for acquisition to minimize damage from flooding and the percentage of those acres acquired
- Acres of District-owned lands identified in land management plans as needing restoration, acres undergoing restoration, and acres with restoration activities completed



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**sfwmd.gov**

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### SERVICE CENTERS

Big Cypress Basin/Naples  
 239-597-1505  
 Broward  
 954-713-3200  
 Florida Keys (Plantation Key)  
 305-853-3219 or 800-464-5067  
 Lower West Coast  
 239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201

Martin/St. Lucie  
 772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100  
 Miami-Dade  
 305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300  
 Okeechobee  
 863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200  
 Orlando  
 407-858-6100 or 800-250-4250  
 Palm Beach County  
 561-682-2283 or 800-432-2045